

**WRITE A LETTER
CHANGE A LIFE**

**WRITE
FOR
RIGHTS**

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



2016 ACTION GUIDE

YOUR LETTERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE: VICTORIES FROM LAST YEAR'S WRITE FOR RIGHTS!



RELEASED

“I am so grateful to Amnesty International and all of the people who participated in the campaign for my release”

Phyo Phyo Aung, a human rights defender and prisoner of conscience released from prison in Myanmar on April 8, 2016.

“I’d like to thank our friends at Amnesty International for their remarkable support these last years, culminating just recently in the Write for Rights Campaign”

Albert Woodfox, released from prison in Louisiana on April



RELEASED



RELEASED

“I feel joy, and so much emotion. To everyone who has stood by me, I give my heartfelt thanks.”

Yecenia Armenta, released from prison in Mexico on June 7, 2016 after surviving torture and rape by police.

“I am happy to finally be free after more than 17 months of imprisonment. I thank Amnesty International and all those who fought in one way or another for my release.”

Fred Bauma, 2015 Write for Rights case along with Yves Makwambala. They are human rights defenders who were freed from prison in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2016.



RELEASED

WELCOME TO WRITE FOR RIGHTS 2016

Dear Human Rights Leader,

I am so glad that you've decided to join this year's Write for Rights! This is Amnesty International's largest grassroots human rights campaign each year, held to mark International **Human Rights Day on December 10th**. This year is extra special because world-renowned artist Ai Weiwei has created a portrait of each case. Ai Weiwei was a prisoner himself in China. Now he is free, using his time and talents for human rights.

Between now and the end of December, we use the power of collective action—especially by writing letters—to convince government officials to resolve urgent cases of abuse. And it works. Take a look on the opposite page to read about victories from last year's Write for Rights that YOU helped win.



This year we have 12 cases from around the world and here in the USA. They include Shawkan (also known by his full name, Mahmoud Abu Zeid), who is shown left in the illustration by Ai Weiwei (© Ai Weiwei) and on the cover. His story really struck me. He is a young photojournalist jailed in Egypt just for doing his job. He is on trial with 738 people and he risks the death penalty. Shawkan is what Amnesty calls a “prisoner of conscience”—a person jailed solely for the peaceful expression of their beliefs or identity. Not every case in this year's Write for Rights is a prisoner of conscience, but they are all important, urgent cases that could really benefit from our letters and petition signatures.

We've tried to make it easier than ever before to participate. This Action Guide and our new website at www.amnestyusa.org/w4r are designed to give you clear guidance on how to take part, how to hold a letter-writing party, what to write and how to let us know the actions you took. We also have a fantastic Educator's Guide for teachers and professors who want to hold Write for Rights in their classrooms. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email or call me: zjohnson@aiusa.org or (212) 633 – 4256. We are here to help.

It is particularly important that you report your letters. We cite the total numbers in our advocacy on the cases and we share the total numbers with the families of our cases, to give them hope. You can use the form at the end of this Action Guide to report or you can report online at www.amnestyusa.org/w4r.

Together, by each doing a small part like writing a short letter, we can change lives and change our world. Next year, I fully expect to feature Shawkan over on the opposite page, with a big, red “RELEASED!” stamp over his photo. Let's make it happen. Let's get writing!

Zeke Johnson
Managing Director, Individuals at Risk Program
Amnesty International USA

AMNESTY
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SIGN UP FOR WRITE FOR RIGHTS AT AMNESTYUSA.ORG/W4R
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA • INDIVIDUALS AT RISK PROGRAM • 5 PENN PLAZA, 16TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10001
IAR@AIUSA.ORG • [#WRITE4RIGHTS](https://twitter.com/WRITE4RIGHTS) [#W4R](https://twitter.com/W4R)

INSTRUCTIONS: 3 STEPS TO WRITE FOR RIGHTS

WIN A \$500 GIFT CARD!

You will be entered in a drawing to win a \$500 gift card if you complete the 3 steps below between now and January 15, 2017.

Once you have signed up at www.amnestyusa.org/w4r, here are the 3 next steps to take:

Step 1: Fill in Your Profile

- Share more information about your writing session and get the resources you need
- You'll be added to the participant map and inspire other people to join us
- You choose whether to show your location or keep it hidden

Step 2: Write Your Letters on this year's 12 cases

- The case sheets and short sample letters are available online and come in the packet with this guide
- For each case, you write one letter to a government official and one to the case (a solidarity letter)
- Most people mail their letters directly to the addressee, to create a tide of letters to officials
- You can write on your own, host a letter-writing party or join a party
- The Resources section of the website has instructions for how to host a party and how to write
- If you'd like to invite Amnesty members in your area to join you, email iar@aiusa.org
- We also have an Educator's Guide to help teachers and professors host a classroom party
- Posters, lanterns, videos and tips on how to earn media and social media attention—as well as other useful tools—are available on our website www.amnestysau.org/w4r

Step 3: Report your letters

- This is essential and just as important as writing!
- Most people report so that we have an accurate tally to use in our follow up advocacy and to share with the families of our cases
- Our goal for Amnesty USA is to write 150,000 letters. We generated 114,240 last year
- Once you report and complete all of the other 2 steps, you will be entered to win the \$500 gift card!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF I WRITE LETTERS?

Yes! A letter may seem a little old-fashioned in this age of online activity, but that is also a source of its strength. As letters have become rarer, they've also become more powerful. Imagine you're a government official who receives 100,000 letters on your desk—you'll notice, and feel pressure to respond. We hear over and over from former prisoners of conscience that letters from Write for Rights participants helped free them. Your letters can be very short. Make sure you are polite and stick to the facts. The case sheets and sample letters will make it clear what to write and where to send the letters.

CAN I JUST SIGN THE SAMPLE LETTERS?

You can, but it will be more effective if you take a little longer to copy the letter in your own writing—or, even better, craft your own personal letter from the points on the case sheets. Unique and personal letters show the government official that you really care about the case and increases the pressure on them to act, so try to write as many as you can. If you run out of time or steam, then please at least sign and send the sample letters. (And report them as well!).

WHEN SHOULD I WRITE?

Write for Rights officially marks Human Rights Day on December 10th, but you are welcome to write or host your event anytime between now and the end of December. Let us know the number of letters you wrote by January 15th.

DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF I REPORT MY LETTERS?

Absolutely! It is essential to let us know how many letters you wrote and, if you hosted a party, how many letters your guests wrote. This helps us track our progress, evaluate whether we met our goal, lobby government officials and give hope to our cases and their families. Please use the online form at www.amnestyusa.org/W4Rimpact or mail in the paper form at the end of this action guide.

DO I HAVE TO WRITE FOR ALL THE CASES?

We encourage you to write on all 12 cases, but of course it is up to you. The more letters we all write, the better our chances of changing lives. And it doesn't take long!

SHOULD I SIGN MY NAME AND INCLUDE MY ADDRESS?

It is up to you. It's good to include because it shows the recipient you're a real person who cares about the case. Sometimes, government officials will write back to you about the case. If you get a response, please send a copy to us at the address in the footer. You may also receive a response from solidarity messages that you send. These are often treasured reminders of the change you made in someone's life.

HOW MUCH IS POSTAGE? HOW DO I GET MONEY FOR STAMPS?

Within the United States, letters and cards (up to 1 oz.) 47 cents each. To all other countries, airmail letters and cards (up to 1 oz.) are \$1.15 each. We recognize that postage for many letters can be expensive. You are welcome to ask for donations, hold a fundraiser or ask guests to bring stamps.

THIS YEAR'S 12 CASES



AZERBAIJAN

Students tortured and jailed for graffiti

Bayram Mammadov and Giyas Ibrahimov dared to criticize the state in the most public way they could. They painted a defiant message on the statue of Azerbaijan's former president – on the eve of his birthday. The following day – 10 May 2016 – they were arrested and jailed on sham drug charges. Both young men were beaten into confessing to carrying heroin. If convicted, they face up to 12 years in prison. Urge Azerbaijan's President to free Bayram and Giyas now.

Bayram & Giyas



CAMEROON

Facing 20 years for a text

Fomusoh Ivo Feh was just about to start university when an SMS message changed everything. One day, he forwarded a sarcastic text to a friend. The message joked that even Boko Haram (an armed group), wouldn't hire you unless you passed five high school subjects. That text got Ivo arrested. Now he faces up to 20 years in prison. Demand that Cameroon drop all charges against Ivo and let him go.

Fomusoh Ivo Feh



CANADA

Indigenous people struggling to save their ancestral lands

More than 100 years ago, Helen Knott's great-great grandfather signed an agreement with the Canadian government that was meant to protect his people's way of life. That promise is being broken. The government has given the go-ahead for the Site C dam, a huge hydro-electric project in the Peace River Valley, British Columbia. If built, it will drown over 80km of land, sweeping away Indigenous hunting, fishing and burial grounds. Tell Canada to halt the Site C dam.

Indigenous Peoples of the Peace River



CHINA

Professor serving life in jail for fighting discrimination

Respected university professor Ilham Tohti worked tirelessly to build bridges between ethnic communities in China. He always opposed violence in his writing and lectures, and sought to encourage cooperation and understanding. But he's been jailed for life – supposedly for stirring up ethnic hatred. Tell China to release Ilham Tohti immediately.

Ilham Tohti



EGYPT

Photojournalist jailed for doing his job

"It was like a Hollywood movie," said Shawkan. Except the bullets were real. The teargas was real. The tanks descending on protests across Egypt were real. And the 1,000 people who were killed were all too real. Journalist Shawkan, whose real name is Mahmoud Abu Zeid, photographed the crackdown in Cairo in August 2013. For this he was arrested, tortured and jailed. Urge Egypt to drop all charges against Shawkan and free him immediately.

Shawkan



INDONESIA

Teacher tortured and jailed for waving a flag

Johan Teterissa has spent nearly 10 years in prison for the simple act of waving a flag. The primary school teacher led a group of men in a dance protest in front of the Indonesian president, which ended with them raising a flag banned by the government. The men were taken by the police, whipped, beaten and eventually thrown in jail. Johan was given a 15-year sentence. Tell Indonesia to free Johan without delay.

Johan Teterissa

THIS YEAR'S 12 CASES (CONTINUED)



IRAN

They took her freedom, now they're taking her sight

Zeynab Jalalian is enduring a life sentence, with the world around her growing darker by the day. Arrested for her political activities, she was tortured in custody, and may now go blind. In 2008, she was jailed for her supposed links to the military wing of a Kurdish opposition group. Today, the authorities are denying her the treatment that will save her sight. Urge Iran to release Zeynab and give her the urgent medical care she needs.

Zeynab Jalalian



MALAWI

Child with albinism hunted for her body parts

Annie Alfred is like any other child in Malawi, but some people believe her body has magic powers. Annie was born with albinism, an inherited condition that prevents her skin cells from producing enough colour. And like other people with albinism in Malawi, Annie could be hunted and killed for her body parts because some think this will make them rich. Thousands like Annie are at risk. Demand that Malawi protect people with albinism from murder.

Annie Alfred



PERU

Attacked by police for speaking out

Máxima Acuña won't back down. A peasant farmer in northern Peru, she has braved violent harassment and intimidation from local police for refusing to leave the land where she lives with her family. She believes they want to drive her away from her home. But she's not going anywhere. Ask Peru to protect her from violence and intimidation.

Máxima Acuña



TURKEY

Arrested over 100 times for speaking out

Lawyer Eren Keskin refuses to give up on justice. In 2014, she was convicted of "insulting the Turkish state" because she spoke out against the killing of a 12-year-old boy by the army. Since then, she has repeatedly faced arrest for articles published in the newspaper she used to edit. The government wants to throw her in jail for speaking out for justice. But Eren will not be silenced. Tell Turkey not to jail Eren.

Eren Keskin



USA

A whistle-blower, not a traitor

When Edward Snowden shared USA intelligence documents with journalists, he revealed how governments were hoovering up our personal data, including phone calls, emails and much more. His actions sparked a global debate which changed laws and protected our privacy. Yet he's forced to live in exile and faces decades in prison. Urge President Obama to pardon Edward Snowden now.

Edward Snowden



USA

Native American activist jailed over 40 years after unfair legal process

Native American activist Leonard Peltier has been imprisoned for more than four decades after an unfair legal process and trial. He was convicted of killing two FBI agents in 1975, and has remained behind bars despite concerns about political bias and injustice that have clouded his case. Now the 71 year-old's health is failing, he has exhausted all appeals, and he is not up for parole until 2024. If the President doesn't act, Leonard Peltier is likely to die in prison. Ask President Obama to grant Leonard Peltier clemency.

Leonard Peltier

WHO TO CONTACT

**WRITE A LETTER
CHANGE A LIFE**

Please Contact Zeke Johnson from Amnesty International USA's Individuals at Risk team with any questions or requests:

zjohnson@aiusa.org
(212) 633-4256

 #W4R
#WRITE4RIGHTS
www.amnestyusa.org/w4r

You can also contact your state's Field Organizer, listed below, for additional support and resources.

MID-ATLANTIC REGION

States: **DC, DE, PA**
Savannah Fox
T: 202.675.8141
sfox@aiusa.org

States: **MD, VA, WV**
Noor Mir
T: 202.509.8140
nmir@aiusa.org

MIDWEST REGION

States: **IA, KY, MN, NE, OH, WI**
Gerry Carolina Rivadeneira
C: 917-583-0956
GCRivadeneira@aiusa.org

States: **IL, IN, KS, MI, MO, ND, SD**
Ernest Coverson
T: 312.435.6386
ecoverson@aiusa.org

NORTHEAST REGION

States: **CT, ME, MA, NH, VT, RI**
Cynthia Gabriel Walsh
T: 617.979.3985
cgabriel@aiusa.org

States: **NY, NJ**
Julie Southwell
T: 617.979.3989
jsouthwell@aiusa.org

SOUTHERN REGION

States: **AL, AR, FL, LA, OK, TN**
Ebony Brickhouse
T: 404.492.7271
ebrickhouse@aiusa.org

States: **GA, MS, NC, SC, TX**
Taliba Obuya
T: 404.492.7274
tobuya@aiusa.org

WESTERN REGION

States: **NorCal, WA, OR, NV, ID, MT, AK**
William Butkus
T: 415.288.1864
wbutkus@aiusa.org

States: **SoCal, AZ, NM, CO, UT, HI, WY**
Muna Sharif
T: 213.259.5299
msharif@aiusa.org

“The thing that made a real difference were the letters I got from ordinary people”

Ales Bialiatski, former prisoner of conscience in Belarus. He was a Write for Rights case in 2012.



LETTER REPORTING FORM – PAGE 1 OF 2

PLEASE LET US KNOW THE NUMBER OF LETTERS YOU WROTE and, if you hosted a party or other letter writing event, the number of letters by all participants. This way, we can track our impact, improve next year's Write for Rights, and use the total number of letters worldwide in our lobbying of government officials. We will also let our cases and their families know how many letters were written for them! Either use our online form at amnestyusa.org/W4Rimpact or complete and mail this one to:

Amnesty International USA
Attn: Write for Rights
5 Penn Plaza, 16th Floor
New York, NY 10001

Have questions? Contact Zeke at zjohnson@aiusa.org or (212) 633-4256

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____ **ZIPCODE:** _____

AMNESTY GROUP NAME OR #
(IF APPLICABLE): _____

SCHOOL NAME, CITY AND STATE
(IF APPLICABLE) _____

HOW DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN WRITE FOR RIGHTS THIS YEAR?

- I hosted a letter writing party or event
- I joined a party or event
- I wrote on my own
- I am an educator and my students wrote letters in class

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT WRITE FOR RIGHTS?

- Email
- Facebook
- Amnesty website
- My local Amnesty group
- Other
- Twitter
- Word of mouth
- I saw it mentioned in a news story
- Amnesty staff/volunteer

WHERE DID YOUR LETTER WRITING TAKE PLACE?

- Classroom
- Church/ Place of Worship
- Residence
- School/ University Campus
- Local Restaurant or Cafe
- Other

HOW MANY LETTERS DID YOU AND YOUR GROUP WRITE FOR EACH CASE?

1) Azerbaijan: Free Bayram and Qiyas

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

2) Cameroon: Free Fomusoh Ivo Feh

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

3) Canada: Stop construction of the Site C hydroelectric dam

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

4) China: Free Ilham Tohti

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

5) Egypt: Free Shawkan

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

6) Indonesia: Free Johan Teterissa

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

7) Iran: Free Zeynab Jalalian

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

8) Malawi: Protect Annie Alfred

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

9) Peru: Stop the harassment of Máxima Acuña and her family

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

10) Turkey: Stop the prosecution of Eren Keskin

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

11) USA: Free Leonard Peltier

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

12) USA: Pardon Edward Snowden

Appeal Letters _____ Solidarity Messages _____

WHAT IS THE APPROXIMATE AGE RANGE(S) OF MOST OF YOUR ATTENDEES?

- Under 12
- 12-17
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-50
- 51-64
- 65+
- My local Amnesty group

LETTER REPORTING FORM – PAGE 2 OF 2

HOW MANY PEOPLE JOINED YOUR EVENT?

HOW MANY PEOPLE BECAME MEMBERS OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA AT YOUR EVENT?

DID YOUR EVENT RAISE ANY MONEY? HOW MUCH?

DO YOU PLAN TO ORGANIZE A WRITE FOR RIGHTS EVENT NEXT YEAR?

Yes

No

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE FOLLOWING?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Did Not Use
Action Guide					
Educator's Guide					
Case Sheets					
Sample Letters					
Website					
Support from Regional Office					
Overall Experience					

Thank you for reporting letters! If you completed all 3 steps, you are now entered to win a \$500 Gift Card